

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
EPA Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant – Transforming Transit: Accelerating a Zero-Emission Fleet in the Chicago Region

Dear Administrator Regan,

On behalf of the Lake Michigan Air Directors Consortium (LADCO), please accept this letter of support for the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in their application for Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) implementation funding of **\$375 million for the *Transforming Transit: Accelerating a Zero-Emission Fleet in the Chicago Region* initiative**. RTA's project, in partnership with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace, will build on ongoing regional collaboration to reduce emissions, enhance bus and train service, and grow ridership.

Public transit plays a critical role in advancing regional climate, economic, and equity goals. Chicago's regional transit system is an economic differentiator – linking talent to opportunities and spurring growth. Amidst a climate crisis, RTA and the region's transit agencies recognize their role in getting more people to ride public transit and transition their fleets of buses and locomotives to zero-emissions. The transit system is also an essential tool to address a legacy of racism and segregation in the Chicago region that has left people of color and people experiencing low incomes overburdened with poor air quality and inadequate access to jobs and services.

With \$375 million in CPRG funding for ***Transforming Transit***, the RTA will work with each of the operators to make the following investments:

- **\$125 million for CTA to purchase up to sixty 60-foot articulated buses and two charging cabinets supporting up to 40 pantograph chargers** to be housed in their 103rd Street garage and used to support service for at least two of 25 routes originating in the historic Pullman neighborhood on Chicago's Far Southeast Side – a historically disadvantaged community and one of the areas of greatest concern for pollution burdens and vulnerability.
- **\$125 million for Pace to purchase up to eighty-three 40-foot buses** to be housed in their North (Waukegan) and Southwest (Bridgeview) Division garages and deployed along 23 routes. Waukegan and Bridgeview are historically disadvantaged communities vulnerable to pollution and air quality issues.

- **\$125 million for Metra to purchase 32 trailer cars and 8 docking stations** that will allow Metra to retire 16 of its oldest diesel locomotives and add service on three high-ridership lines: Union Pacific North, Milwaukee District West, and the Rock Island Beverly Branch.

LADCO is a Chicago-based 501(c)(3) air quality research and planning organization that provides technical assistance to our member states on problems of urban to regional-scale air quality. Our membership includes state air agencies for Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. LADCO uses complex computer models of weather, emissions, and atmospheric chemistry to investigate the main drivers of air pollution in the Great Lakes region. We work with federal, state, tribal, and local air agencies to improve air quality in the region. Investing in a reliable, zero emission public transit system in the Chicago region would represent major progress.

While these projects have direct benefits to several Chicago area communities where affected routes and stations are located, the combined CTA, Metra, and Pace initiatives go beyond neighborhood borders and benefit the entire region in reducing emissions, improving air quality, and enhancing service to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. Chicago is a nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) and transportation emissions in Chicago contribute to downwind nonattainment issues in the region. The transit emissions reduction projects funded through this grant will advance the goals of U.S. EPA and the states in this region to meet their NAAQS attainment commitments.

This project will make significant progress on the region's goals to decrease the environmental footprint of the transportation sector and move toward a more sustainable network while prioritizing communities burdened by poor air quality. For these reasons, I urge U.S. EPA's full consideration of RTA's proposal for ***Transforming Transit: Accelerating a Zero-Emission Fleet in the Chicago Region*** under the applicable guidelines.

Sincerely,



Zachariah Adelman
Executive Director
Lake Michigan Air Directors Consortium